SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Page 1, line 5, insert the following heading and paragraph:

--STATEMENT OF RELATED APPLICATIONS

This patent application is the Unites States Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Chapter II National Phase of International Application No. PCT/EP03/04523, having an International Application Date of 30 April 2003, designating the United States of America, which in turn claims priority on German Patent Application No. 20207055.7, having a filing date of 3 May 2002, and German Patent Application No. 20209330.1, having a filing date of 15 June 2002.--

Page 1, line 6, delete the heading "Description" and replace it with the following headings:

--BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field--

Page 1, lines 8-11, amend the paragraph as follows:

The invention relates to a supportive spring base for, in particular, a mattress for a place to sleep and/or recline ~~in accordance with the precharaterizing clause of claims 1, 7 and 8~~ having a plurality of spring slats running at a parallel distance to one another, and having longitudinal struts which run transversely with respect to the spring slats and belong, in particular, to a frame, the spring slats being mounted with their end regions on the longitudinal struts.

Page 1, line 17, insert the following heading:

--2. **Prior Art**--

Page 1, line 27, insert the following heading:

--BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

Page 1, line 34 through page 2, line 11, amend the paragraph as follows:

A supportive spring base for achieving this object has ~~the features of claim 1~~ a plurality of spring slats running at a parallel distance to one another, and longitudinal struts which run transversely with respect to the spring slats and belong, in particular, to a frame, the spring slats being mounted with their end regions on the longitudinal struts, characterized by connecting elements for connecting at least two spring slats in each case. Accordingly, provision is made for the connecting elements of the supportive spring base to be designed in such a manner that they connect at least two spring slats in each case to one another. Whereas it was previously customary to mount all of the spring slats independently of one another, the invention now goes down another route by the independent mounting and therefore the isolated spring behavior of the individual spring slats being intentionally removed by the spring slats being connected to one another by means of the connecting elements. The connecting elements serve in this manner not only to influence, in particular to increase, the spring properties of the supportive spring base but also the connecting elements connect individual spring slats to one another.

Page 3, line 34 through page 4, line 16, amend the paragraph as follows:

According to one advantageous refinement of the invention, which may also involve an independent solution of the object on which the invention is based, the connecting elements may be formed from at least one spring element, at least one load-bearing means and/or suspension devices for connecting the connecting elements to the spring slats ~~(claim 7)~~. The spring elements impart independent spring properties to the connecting elements. For this purpose, the spring elements are preferably designed as spring bellows, as spring plates or as elastic wings. The load-bearing means serve to hold the spring elements, which impart elastic properties to the connecting elements, between two adjacent spring slats in each case. The load-bearing means can be of entirely or substantially rigid design. The remaining parts of the connecting means then ensure that the spring slats are elastically connected. However, it is also possible for the load-bearing means and the spring elements to be of elastic design, in which case the spring properties of the load-bearing means preferably differ from those of the spring elements.

Page 4, line 18 through page 5, line 6, amend the paragraph as follows:

According to a further independent solution ~~(claim 8)~~ of the object mentioned at the beginning, which may also be a development of the supportive spring base ~~as claimed in the other claims~~, provision is made for the connecting elements to be mounted on the spring slats in such a manner that the connecting elements are movable both in a rotational and also translational manner relative to the spring slats – or vice versa. The translational mobility of the spring slats with respect to the connecting elements leads inter alia to it being possible to change the distances of the spring slats from one another in spite of the spring slats being connected by the connecting elements. The rotational movement between the spring slats and the connecting elements makes it possible, for example, for the connecting elements to sag in the center without the connecting elements as a result having to rotate the spring slats about their longitudinal axis. The aforesaid rotational and translational mobility of the connecting elements with respect to the spring slats results in the spring slats not being stiffened owing to them being connected by the connecting elements. Nevertheless, the coupling of the spring slats to one another by the connecting elements – even if the coupling is elastic – results in the movement behavior, in particular the bending behavior or cushioning behavior, of the spring slats being influenced in a specific way.

Page 9, line 21, insert the following header:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS--

Page 10, line 12, insert the following header:

--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS--

Page 26, line 4, delete the heading "Patent Claims" and replace it with the following headings:

--CLAIMS

What is Claimed is:--